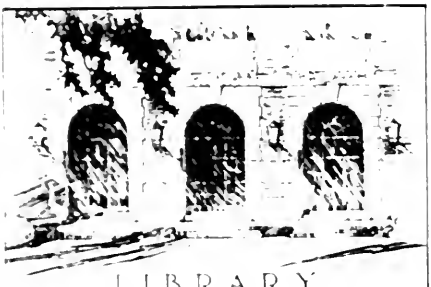

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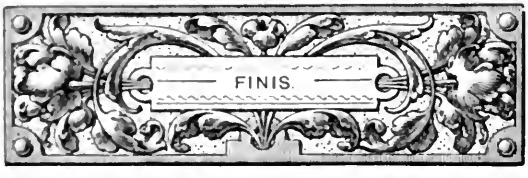

Universities' Mission to Central Africa.

SERMON BY THE REV. CANON KING

PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF

BISHOP SMYTHIES,

In St. Paul's Cathedral,

ST. ANDREW'S DAY, (NOV. 30,) 1883,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A LETTER FROM THE BISHOP.

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A LETTER FROM THE BISHOP.

My Dear Friends,

A few words of gratitude are due from me to all those who have given me such a cordial welcome, and shewn me such great kindness on my appointment to the Bishopric of the Central African Mission. When the post was offered me with all its solemn responsibilities, I certainly felt but little qualified for it, and the very kindness that I have received makes me fear the more lest I should sadly disappoint those who have shewn such confidence in me. If I succeed at all in the difficult work which lies before me, I am quite sure it will be because of the many prayers which are offered for the Mission, and because it pleases God sometimes to shew His power by calling and using for His glory, those who would otherwise be but little fitted for the position in which He places them. From what I have seen in different parts of the country, I think there is a widespread interest in the work to which I am going, and I have a good hope that there will not be wanting men with a true

vocation to a Missionary life to volunteer for it. But I would remind all our kind friends in England that good work is effected gradually, and I would ask them to resist that eagerness for apparent results, which too often besets the friends of Missions. We have to do our best, some to work and pray, others to pray for those who are working, to look constantly to the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom in each step we take, and then to leave the results to God. Everything certainly looks hopeful in the Mission Field itself, and there seems no reason to diminish the operations of the Mission in any direction. In the nature of things the development of its work will be chiefly in the direction of the mainland, but I think experience has shewn us that very great care must be taken in the selection of sites, for the establishment of Christian communities. On the other hand when any tribe which may be reasonably supposed to be able to protect its teachers, shews a sincere desire for a Missionary, it would seem to be our duty to comply with the request as soon as possible. But in each particular case a Bishop to whom Missionary work is new, must depend very much on the experience of those who have already done good service in the Mission Field. It will be a great advantage to me to have the example of my predecessors to help me, and the record of their work; indeed, unless Bishop Steere had accomplished his great undertaking, of compiling a Swahili grammar, and translating the New Testament and Prayer Book into that

language, I should have felt even more hesitation in attempting to follow him. I need hardly I think urge the claims of the Mission upon your liberality—this only I would say, when I am in Africa and unable to plead the cause of the Mission at home, I would ask all who take an interest in our work, to be ever on the watch for fitting men, so that a regular supply may be kept up, and the natural development of the work may not be retarded for want of Missionaries. I think I may promise to those who come, a warm welcome and an affectionate appreciation of their labours on the part of the Bishop and all those who are already working in Central Africa.

Your very faithful Servant in our Lord,

CHARLES ALAN,
Bishop of the Central African Mission.

SERMON BY THE REV. CANON KING.

"Sir, we would see Jesus."—S. John xii. 21.

These words occur in close connection with the history of the Saint whose festival we are celebrating to-day, and they represent to us a striking feature of that Apostle's life. He more than once was the chosen means of bringing men to Jesus. It was Andrew, we are told, who first found his own brother Simon, and "saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ," and he brought him to Jesus, thus leaving to all who would follow in his steps an example of especial comfort. It shows us that we may bring to Christ those who will be greater than ourselves. For as the great Apostle of the Gentiles was introduced into the Apostolic band by the lesser S. Barnabas, so the great Apostle of the Circumcision, S. Peter, is first brought to Jesus by the lesser S. Andrew, leaving us the comforting hope that we may work with Him, and bring to Him those greater than ourselves. It was S. Andrew, again, who brought the lad to Jesus with five barley loaves and two small fishes, thus enabling another to do what he could not do himself; and, once more, towards the close of our Lord's earthly ministry, when certain Greeks, come up to worship at the feast, came to Philip and desired him, saying, "Sir, we would

see Jesus," Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. It was a great occasion in very close connection with, and in a solemn relation to, the cause of our gathering here to-day. For the Greeks who desired to see Jesus, whom Andrew with Philip introduced, though not utter heathen yet practically represent the spreading of the Gospel to the Gentile world.

It was felt—if I may say so with reverence—to be a great occasion by our Blessed Lord Himself. He was greatly disturbed. "The hour," He said, "is come. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, yet for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." What was it that stirred the soul of Jesus so deeply in the coming of the Greeks whom Andrew and Philip brought, but that He saw in them the coming in of the Gentile world? And He knew that Passion and Resurrection were the conditions upon which alone that world could be won. Passion and Resurrection for Himself first, then a long and noble line of martyrs following in His steps, continuing His work, like corns of wheat falling into the soil, and then bringing forth much fruit. The blood of the martyrs, was to be the seed of the Church. He knew how many

noble lives must be offered up before the fulness of the Gentiles' should come in. He knew it as being Very God; He felt it as being Perfect Man. He knew the heart of humanity throughout the world was yearning to see Him. He knew the words, so simple in themselves, "Sir, we would see Jesus," expressed the deepest wish in every soul, in every age, to have closer communion with Him, for He had made of one blood all nations of men. He knew the heart of man was made to love Him, and that it would find no real rest, except through Himself in God. But He knew at what a price this rest must be obtained—Passion and Resurrection—and His soul was troubled.

Bishop Steere in his sermon in June last year, speaking with that simplicity and spiritual insight which we recognise afterwards in those who have spoken to us near the time of their own departure, is recorded to have said, "If we would see what it is that the Mission is asking for, and what it is that is being done by it, we should see something strangely like the life of Christ Himself on earth." I believe the scene in the life of Christ which the words of my text represent, would tell us most truly what the Mission in Central Africa is asking for in these simple words, "Sir, we would see Jesus." The heathen tribes of Africa do not, indeed, know the Sacred Name; they have never heard the story of His love; but it is an error, it is an injustice to them, and a wrong to the Universal Fatherhood of God, to argue from their want of definite conceptions and precise expressions of

the truth that they have no capacity for it, no longing for it at all. We English people have still no word of our own for conscience any more than they may have; but we know what we mean by the foreign word which expresses our more perfected moral conceptions; and they have imperfect conceptions of right and wrong, of good and bad, which are capable of becoming clearer, and which are, in reality, nothing else than longings for Jesus. We must recognise the presence of God with them. God made them and has never wholly left them. "The Father worketh hitherto and I work." Jesus is the conscious or unconscious centre and desire of all humanity. All do not know Him, or know that He knows them. To masses of mankind He would now still have to say, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip?" The longing for truth, for holiness, the longing for happiness, which constitute the great desires of man, exist in germ wherever man is found, and the satisfaction of these longings is one and the same—Jesus, the Incarnate God. He is the Truth, the Lord our Righteousness. He is our Peace. It may require years or generations of culture to perfect, even according to our standard of perfection, the uncivilised nations of the world, but the capacity is in them, even though now unapparent, and we have the means for its development. We have the means. Yes, here lies our responsibility. They, we are told, are eager for the Gospel. But where are the messengers of peace? One of the results of

a comparison of the various systems of religion has been to make the need of a Revelation more evident. The language which the Apostle uses to describe the heathen state, describes it more exactly than we have been tempted to think. We had known something of the heathen world from a few of the most enlightened of the most cultured nations. Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, represented to us the West. Fragments of the Vêdas, the Rules of the Buddhist, the Analects of Confucius, the Institutes of Menu, attracted us, and kindled our admiration and sympathy for the East. And it seemed hard to deal fairly with such writings and the writings of S. Paul. But a more perfect acquaintance with heathen literature, and a more practical apprehension of its powerlessness, and of the consequent chasm which exists in non-Christian countries, between the theory and the practice, has brought us back again to see that the language of the Apostles and of our Lord is the language of fact and not of prejudice. The Prince of the Power of the air holds a real dominion in heathen lands, in a manner which he cannot hold in Christendom. The land of the heathen is a land of darkness; their eyes need opening to see even the full beauty of man. The area of the social virtues was really piteously narrow. Greek could care for none but Greeks, and only for a small section of themselves. They were walking in darkness, even as regards their fellow men. They saw men as trees walking. They did not know the one brotherhood of man,

and the reason the Apostle gives, when he says that they were practically without God in the world. It is a fearful picture, and one which Christian people, reading the Oriental and Greek books in this Christian land, have been inclined to disbelieve, or at least to put aside, and fear to realise. The Apostle describes the condition of the Gentile world as he knew it practically to be. The characteristics of their mind, he says, are really vanity and emptiness. Their understanding is darkened by an abiding darkness; through darkness they are alienated from the light which God gives. There is in them a deep-seated abiding ignorance. The characteristics of their heart are callousness, hardness, without desire of good. They are past feeling and give themselves up in wantonness to work uncleanness of every kind, he calls them practically *χωρὶς χριστοῦ ἀθεοι*, without Christ, and therefore without God in the world. This is a terrible picture, but it is no worse than that our Blessed Lord Himself addressed to the great Apostle of the Gentiles as the reason for his missionary labours. He was to go to the Gentile world to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

It has become increasingly clear during the last five and twenty years, that only one nation can be said to have made the worship of the One Personal God, their unchanged national religion; but the Jewish Theocracy was based on a Revelation, that of Mahommed is drawn from it.

In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. Man has not been able without the help of Revelation to discern and hold fast, and hand on to his fellow man the two central truths upon which man's greatness depends, his own individual eternal personality, and the existence of the One Eternal Personal God. We see man on the face of the earth as in a fine house which once had been inhabited, from which the light had been withdrawn, feeling after a half-realised personality if haply he might find Him. Has then the work of the last quarter of a century left us *no* results? Have we made no progress towards the truth, and in the truth towards God and one another? Surely yes! The increased knowledge of the Religions of the world, has taught us that God is still striving with man, that where man *is* there God *is* in a peculiar manner and degree. God is a Spirit, and man feels there is a Spirit, though the feeling may be one of fear and, as we call it, of superstition, but we recognise it as God's work. We have learned to approach the heathen world with a greater reverence and tenderness and love. We see in them a capacity for receiving the truth, but without help they cannot discern it. Their capacity to possess it, and inability to procure it, and our ability to give it makes the call for missionary labour more clear and urgent than before. True, the heathen world possesses in some places, and in some individuals, more moral and religious wealth than we thought, but when it is all reckoned, we know now that it

is not enough to pay the debt. We seem to see more clearly what our work is. God has not ceased to strive with man : there is life in humanity still, but it seems to lie along the roadside of life, like the traveller on his way from Jerusalem, robbed, wounded, fallen, half dead, unable to rise, waiting for the good Samaritan to come and give his gifts and impart his strength. There is a knowledge of right and wrong, though not used exactly as we should use it. This power to distinguish between right and wrong, this moral sense, this conscience, speaks not as of itself, but as bringing us to the judgment of another, it is in us, yet not wholly of us : it speaks of another—of God. Conscience in fallen man is not independent, but needs the help of Revelation to make its mission clear. It is feeling after something which it cannot find, it is longing for more than it has, and its yearning really means, "Sir, we would see Jesus." It needs help from above to make clear what it is sure must be, the knowledge of the Personal God. The conscience cannot reach its full and intended power without the aid of Revelation. We cannot accept God's Revelation without accepting Christ, and Christianity is the religion which God has revealed to satisfy the needs of man, but Christianity is coupled with a Divine Society. Historically, Christianity implies the Church with its Faith once delivered ; its unbroken, Divinely appointed Ministry ; its life-giving Sacraments ; its variously adapted discipline. This, then, is our answer to the unconscious cry of the Gentile

world, "Sir, we would see Jesus?" "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the right way." Do not think that ye can live without Him; do not think to stand on the right way of a mere morality, and live a life in obedience to the moral law, without the knowledge of the law-giver. "Kiss the Son," accept Revelation. Do not think that you can retain the true sense of God's justice and mercy and reject the Atonement. Do not think you can retain Theism and reject the Cross of Christ. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry." Do not think to retain Christianity and reject the fulness of the faith once delivered to the saints, its creeds, its ministry, its Sacraments. "Kiss the Son." Put away the prejudice of controversy, and the arbitrary solution of an uninstructed conscience. See the universality of the need, and the catholicity of the reply. Christianity is for all classes, rich and poor; in it there is neither bond nor free. Christianity is for all, for both sexes; in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. Christianity is for all races; in it there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Greek nor Barbarian. Christianity is for all time: Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It is not that in this way we wish to bind humanity with a new bondage, but in truth to secure its freedom, just as the laws of human government do not bind the people for whom they are made in order to check them from their enjoyment of greater freedom, but rather to secure for the nation those highest aspirations for right living, of which individuals

are capable, but cannot always as individuals enforce. Civil laws do not destroy, but preserve liberty. So the creeds and laws of the Church Catholic do not fetter the freedom of the individual spiritual life, but are the support and protection of individual souls, protecting them even, in their weaker moments, against themselves, and enabling them finally to attain to the full liberty of the sons of God. It is for such reasons as these, believing that the real yearning of humanity is not simply for wealth, or knowledge, or power, nay, nor all the varied and true treasures expressed by the one word, *Civilization*, but for God; and—believing that God's will is to reconcile men back unto Himself through Christ, and that Christ's will is to be proclaimed through His Church, and to be found in it—it is for such reasons as these that we are thankful to Almighty God to day that He has not left the cry of the souls in Africa without an answer, but has raised up you, my brother, whom in some small degree, perhaps, in years past I was privileged to help, but to whom I now speak as one soon to be raised far above myself, as the successor of the Apostles, and be sent with the only message which will satisfy the hearts of men, and to tell them the truth as it is in Jesus.

It is, indeed, to me a proof of one of the lessons we should learn from the life of the Saint of to-day—we may bring to Christ those who will be greater than ourselves. For if the learning and the extension of knowledge during the last twenty-

five years have shown the need of the message of Revelation to enable man to know himself, his brother, and his God, so, also, I believe the result of recent criticism leaves the fact increasingly beyond doubt that those high and awful statements touching the necessity and divine dignity of the Episcopate which have been preserved to us in the Epistles of Ignatius, are true statements of the teaching of the age, and of the man whose name they bear. It has been well, perhaps, that we have been allowed a moment of pardonable suspense for the preparation of our spiritual sight before the evidences for these Epistles is more forcibly brought home to us, for the light which they throw upon the position of a Bishop in the Church of Christ is bright and dazzling indeed. What do they say? "Flee divisions as the beginning of evils. See that ye follow your Bishop, as Jesus Christ the Father; and the Presbytery, as the Apostles; reverence the Deacons as the command of God. Let no one do anything which belongs to the Church separately from the Bishop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as well established which is either offered by the Bishop, or by one to whom the Bishop hath given his consent. Wheresoever the Bishop shall appear there let the people also be, as where Jesus Christ is, for there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful separately from the Bishop either to Baptise or to celebrate the Holy Communion." The truth has been preserved for us, but who is sufficient for these things? No one, indeed in his

own strength, but we have good hope my brother, that God, Who we believe has led you here to-day, has also prepared you, and will support you in the great burden which He lays upon you.

We have evidence which gives us hope. A son of that university which gave Mackenzie to sow the first seeds in this mission field and then to consecrate the land by his grave; we pray that his spirit may rest upon you. Admitted to the ministry by the hands of one to whom I believe the Church of England owes a debt that this world will never know—ordained by Bishop Wilberforce, we pray that the spirit which moved his heart, and the heart of his great father before him, to burst the bonds of slavery and set the sons of Africa free, may also guide and empower you to free them from the still more terrible slavery of sin and to give them the glorious liberty of the Gospel of Christ. And since these earlier prophecies, which accompany, as it were, your earlier training and admission into the ministry we have evidence of God's presence with you. The ability and assuidity with which you presided over a parish of more than 20,000 souls; the faithfulness and wisdom with which you declared to them the whole counsel of God; the patience, tenderness, and courage with which as a Priest of God you laboured to set free and teach individual souls; the respect, gratitude and love which clergy and laity, rich and poor, have long felt for you, and recently, on more than one occasion, made known; the simplicity and self-forgetting trustful-

ness with which you have given yourself to this new service, to serve your Lord, not knowing, not questioning what the future of your life or death may be; all this, and more, gives us good ground for hoping that you will go to your new and harder work supported by the prayers of many hearts, and encouraged by the evidence God has already given you of His presence with you and His love. And if it seem to you, as more or less it must, that you are leaving the centre of the civilised world to go and work in a far-off country, which at present has relatively little influence on the great body of mankind, let me remind you that the whole world is but the one field of God. He, the Lord of the harvest, can gather the seed from one quarter and sow it where He will. Place and time *are not* to Him. Those who work with Him work everywhere; the fruit of their labour can spring up where He wills. What does not European Christianity owe to Africa? Who can tell the fulness of harvest reaped in Europe, which S. Augustine sowed in Hippo? What does not the renewed life in the Church of England in these last fifty years, owe to the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, besides Augustine whom we almost feel to be our own. It is a thousand years or more since these lived, and worked, and died; but verily there is a light sown for the righteous, and in the darkness, if He will, He can cause it to spring forth. So may it be with you, my brother. Continue as you have begun, to live and teach the faith in all its fulness,

and you will thus best answer the unconscious yearnings in the hearts of those to whom now you go. Whatever may be the immediate result of your Episcopate, if only it be faithful to Him, it cannot be without its fruit. It may be that your words and acts, and the lives of those whom you will gather round you will be the means of preserving in the old faith those who will be living here in England, at a period as far remote in the future as separates us now from the lives and writings of S. Augustine and S. Athanasius in the past; or, to make the analogy still more correct, that as we in England, after a thousand years and more, have been supported in the faith by the lives and writings of another people, Sons of Africa, so the same truth brought back by you to Africa now, may through a native Church, a thousand years to come, hand on the faith to other nations besides their own, and thus—(who can tell?)—the Church in Africa become the fountain out of which the waters of salvation may be drawn to refresh thirsting souls of a converted India and of a China at last won to the obedience of the Cross of Christ. We will not grudge you, my brother, great as the grief will be of many souls at your departure; we will not regret you in the far-off land to which you go—knowing that He for Whom, and with Whom, and in Whom, you go forth to labour will in no wise let you lose your reward.